

Pilot No. 7: Assessment of Technology Group Template for ConPlan Submission, Track Results, and Report Performance

Focus: Consolidated Plan Document and Performance Reporting

Purpose:

- 1) To determine whether a tool developed by the Technology Working Group will enhance the ability and/or effectiveness of grantees to carry forward data from the Consolidated Plan submission to subsequent Annual Action Plans and reporting.
- 2) To provide a better means for determining success of programs.

Participants:

Madison, WI; Lancaster County, PA; State of Wisconsin; Jefferson City, MO; Jefferson County, MO, Fond du Lac, WI; and other potential sites within the Wisconsin, St. Louis, and Omaha Field Office jurisdictions.

Pilot Description:

Currently, Consolidated Plans have many pages of text, parts are submitted by a variety of means (hard copy, electronic), and there is a lack of consistent data requested and provided. As a pilot project, the technology working group designed a tool for grantees to streamline the process for developing a Consolidated Plan and for reporting performance. The proposed tool would:

- Provide one submission mechanism to accommodate all parts of the Consolidated Plan, Action Plan, and performance reports.
- Produce more concise documents to capture goals, strategies, and activities consistent with the use of information technology systems (IDIS) and other performance reports (CAPER.)
- Minimize narratives, optimize use of numerical data, and maximize consistency of data requested.
- Bring forward Consolidated Plan data into annual action plans and performance reports.
- Enhance the ability of HUD staff, grantees, and the public to evaluate performance by improving consistency of data across all three documents.

- Enhance performance measurement by providing a format that encourages grantees to create measurable annual and 5-year goals for each program area.

The tool is currently in Word format. Pilot communities would compare the tool to their existing Consolidated Plan and comment on the completeness and usability of the tool.

An updated tool has been developed and the St. Louis and Wisconsin Field Offices will test the tool (and subcomponents of it) in communities within their jurisdictions. The Wisconsin Field Office presented and discussed the tool at a conference scheduled in October. Pilot communities would compare the tool to their existing Consolidated Plan and comment on the completeness and usability of the tool.

Summary of Grantee Pilots:

Fond du Lac, WI will test the tool in Word format developed by the Technology Working Group. The grantees will assess the ease of data entry and implementation.

Jefferson City, MO and Jefferson County, MO will test the tool in Word format developed by the Technology Working Group. The grantees will assess the ease of data entry and implementation.

Lancaster County, PA will test the tool (Word format) developed by the Technology Working Group. They planned to enter their 2000-2004 Consolidated Plan and 2003 Action Plan into the tool and survey stakeholders to assess the effectiveness of the tool in helping them understand the County's program goals and performance in achieving them. After trying this, they reported difficulty in making the format of the plan fit the format of the tool but indicate the tool would be useful for future plans.

Madison, WI will test the tool in Word format developed by the Technology Working Group. The grantee will assess the ease of data entry and retrieval and survey some of its sub-grantees to assess the effectiveness in helping them understand the overall City program goals and performance in achieving them.

State of Pennsylvania will fulfill the second purpose of this pilot by moving to an "outcomes-based measures" focus rather than "activities" focus. The annual performance report is expected to be more meaningful and understandable for the public, policy makers and program administrators.

State of Wisconsin will test the tool (Word format) developed by the Technology Working Group and will provide comment on how their current Consolidated Plan would fit into the proposed tool.

Pilot No. 7 Status as of December 31, 2003

Fond du Lac, WI will be using the tool when they submit their first Consolidated Plan in 2004.

Jefferson City, MO submitted their first Consolidated Plan submission using the tool in November, 2003.

Jefferson County, MO submitted their first Consolidated Plan using the tool (before all links were tested) and submitted a hard copy of the tool and associated tables to serve as the official submission in November 2003.

Lancaster County, PA tested a tool (Word format) developed by the Technology Working Group and reported difficulty in making format of plan fit format of tool but indicated tool might be useful for future plans.

Madison, WI tested the initial March 17 version of the tool and found it had many positive attributes but it needed further refinement. The city was provided an updated version of the tool, with a request to review it and determine if it addressed his concerns.

State of Pennsylvania A draft Consolidated Plan that identifies common and optional outcome measures was made available on the Department of Commerce and Economic Development's Internet website for public comment from November 18, 2003 through December 18, 2003 and has been submitted to HUD for review. The draft plan is available at the Department's website: <http://www.inventpa.com/>. The State anticipates developing new reporting forms for its grantees and will provide training on how to implement the new forms.